

March 23, 2020

Hon. Lisa MacLeod
Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries
438 University Ave., 6th Floor
Toronto, ON M7A 1N3

Sent via email: Minister.MacLeod@ontario.ca

Dear Minister MacLeod:

On behalf of the National Marine Manufacturers of Canada (NMMA Canada) and Ontario's recreational boating industry, we are writing with respect to funding to support the tourism and recreation sectors impacted by the coronavirus (COVID-19) epidemic. We appreciate the decisive steps taken by your government to date and ask that you consider further measures to protect employees, support small and medium-size enterprises (SMEs), and allow manufacturers to keep investing in the Ontario economy.

Ontario's recreational boating industry supports 30,000 direct and indirect jobs and more than 2,000 businesses. While all industries are no doubt being affected by COVID-19, the tourism and hospitality sectors face a particularly acute threat from mandatory closures and social distancing measures being imposed by municipal, provincial, and federal authorities. These steps are necessary, and we fully support the advice of medical experts in this regard. However, we are also very concerned about the unavoidable economic impact and/or job losses at dealerships, local marinas, service shops, restaurants and other businesses who depend on recreational boaters.

Canadian boaters enjoy and travel along the waterways boosting tourism and spend about \$400 for every trip; Canadian and foreign visitors spent \$7.4 billion dollars (2014 data) boating. Businesses like marinas, tourism operators and hotels on the water rely on boaters for their business. As well, boat dealers are entering the most important time of year and COVID-19 has already had a dramatic effect on sales – for example, through the cancellation of boat shows and other trade events. Annual meetings and events like boat shows contribute millions of dollars to local economies and draw-in much needed tourism traffic to Ontario.

To aid the thousands of workers in Ontario's boating sector affected by this pandemic, we would urge your government to enact the following policy recommendations:

- Provide financial assistance for associations, non-profits, and other tax-exempt organizations that will be impacted by event cancellations resulting from COVID-19;
- Echoing the advice of the Canadian Manufacturing Coalition, put an immediate moratorium on the remittance of payroll, property, sales and income taxes by individuals and businesses; and
- Engage with the recreational boating sector and other members of the hospitality and tourism sector in the coming weeks as you develop further economic measures to respond to this crisis.

Thank you once again for your time and attention, we appreciate all your support.

Sincerely,



Sara Anghel, President
NMMA Canada



Rick Layzell, CEO
Boating Ontario

Cc: Hon. Rod Phillips, Minister of Finance
Hon. Vic Fedeli, Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade